





THE
BATTLE
OF
DRUMCLOG,
Fought on the 1st June, 1679.
BETWEEN THE
KING'S TROOPS,
AND THE
COVENANTERS.

By the LAIRD OF TORFOOT,
AN OFFICER IN THE PRESBYTERIAN ARMY.



Glasgow, — Printed for the Booksellers.

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NARRATIVE, &c.

We have received some files of American Papers, to the middle of August last. In one of these, the "National Gazette," we find a Narrative of the Battle of Drumclog, which, as our readers will remember, are described in the Novel of Old Mortality. This Narrative is introduced by the following Letter to the Editors of the National Gazette:—

Messrs. Editors,

Of all the Waverly Novels "Old Mortality" produced perhaps the greatest sensation in Scotland. It pleased the light readers. It was very acceptable to the Tory party. It aroused the attention of the Whigs—I mean not the Radicals, but the descendants and lovers of the true "Whigs of the Covenant." It excited a burst of admiration, and a burst of indignation, deep and severe.—The one from the Tories, and the mere admirers of the historical romance—the other from the religious and devout body of the nation.

It was a novel affair, and it excited the pub-

lic feeling to an intense degree, to see venerable clergymen descending into the arena to attack the statements and sentiments of a Romancer. There was reason for this. That book was read by every body, and it contains the sentiments of toryism in their most imposing and their most appalling form—and there is much that approaches to a degree of impiety which that sober people will not bear. Nay, the religious public deemed that they saw no less than a design to ridicule the memory of the martyrs and patriots of the days of Charles II., and to vilify their holy religion. The description which he has given of the conduct and motives of the military chieftains; the personal accomplishments and the romantic gallantry with which his imagination has clothed the atrocious Claverhouse, do prove that there is too much room for the one; and the absurd balderdash and disgusting cant which he has put into the mouths of the leading preachers of that age, (and they were no mean men,) do altogether show a spirit of hostility and persecution, not to be tamely submitted to in this enlightened age.*

* The clerical characters who figured in the scene presented partial in "Old Mortality," were Douglas, Cargil, King, Douglas. Douglas had been offered a bishopric, and the see was kept vacant some time for him by Sharp. Cargil had been the accomplished and popular minister of the Barony Kirk of Glasgow. King an ac

The result of this public indignation was possibly in favour of the "good old cause." Accurate engravings of Graham of Clavers were brought forward. In opposition to the romantic paintings of the novelist, the harsh features of his iron face were revealed; and the 'out ensemble' exhibited an exterior in every respect befitting the gloomy and dark soul of a man whose hands were dipped in human blood to the wrists!—And in the late additional details of his public character, it has been satisfactorily shown, from the most authentic documents, that 'the gallant and enterprising officer' of Hume and of the Tories, was a cold-blooded murderer of the unarmed peasantry; that he shot down, without trial or form of law, three citizens on their lands, and by their own re-sides; that he belonged to that licenced banditti, the oppressors of their country, who employed even the sagacity of blood hounds to discover the lurking places of the patriots and martyrs, whom they butchered in the presence of their wives and crying babes. See Laing's History of Scotland, vol. ii, and Scottish Worthies, &c., passim.

Another consequence of this national excitement was a holy zeal, which put forth its

accomplished scholar, was the companion of Lord Cardross. Sir Walter erred egregiously in putting such disgusting cant into the lips of such gentlemen, patriots, and martyrs as these!

activities in repairing the tombs and monuments over the bodies of the martyrs. Each sacred spot, on mountains, in vallies, and on moors, where the patriots had fallen by the steel of the life-guards, was sought out, and monuments created, and tomb-stones repaired and a host of 'Old Mortalities' put in requisition to chissel deeper the names and the epitaphs of the martyrs.

This is my introduction.—I now offer you the 'Battle of Drumclog.' And the 'Battle of Bothwell' shall be forthcoming—that you may judge of the contrast between the account of these battles in the Waverly romance, and in history.

In his 'Battle of Drumclog' the 'great wizard' makes the covenanters' army murder a gallant young officer, who came as the flag. Nothing can be more erroneous and slanderous. It is an outrage to history. It is only surpassed by that more outrageous fiction of their intended murder of young Morton, in the night after Bothwell battle.

The following is given in the words of the Laird of Torfoot whose estate is this day in the possession of two brothers, his lineal descendants of the fifth generation. The Laird speaks of what he saw and what he did.—I have carefully compared his account with the statements handed down by family tradition—particularly with the statements of a véné-

ble aunt, who died lately in Pennsylvania, aged nearly ninety, and who was the granddaughter of the Laird's second son. I have also compared the account with the brief printed account of these battles in the 'Scottish Worthies,' and the 'Cloud of Witnesses.' This last book (p. 334, Lond. edit.) records the Laird's name in the list of those driven into banishment; but who, in spite of Clavers and Charles, and shipwrecks, by the grace of God, regained his native halls to bless his afflicted family, and who finally died in peace, in the presence of his family, in a good old age.



THE BATTLE OF DRUMCLOG.



"It was on a fair Sabbath morning, 1st June, A. D. 1879, that an assemb^y of Covenanters sat down on the heathy mountains of Drumclog. We had assembled not to fight, but to worship the God of our fathers. We were far from the tumults of cities.—The long dark heath waved around us; and we disturbed no living creatures, saving the pees weeps* and the heather-cock. As usual, we

* Anglee, tee-wit, or lap-wing.

had come armed. It was for self-defence. For desperate and ferocious bands made bloody ralls through the country, and pretending to put down treason, they waged war against religion and morals. They spread ruin and havoc over the face of bleeding Scotland.

The venerable Douglas had commenced the solemnities of the day. He was expatiating on the execrable evils of tyranny. Our souls were on fire at the remembrance of our country's sufferings and the wrongs of the church. In this moment of intense feeling, our watchman posted on the neighbouring height, fired his carabine, and ran toward the Congregation. He announced the approach of the enemy. We raised our eyes to the Minister. 'I have done,' said Douglas, with his usual firmness — 'You have got the theory,—now for the practice; you know your duty; self-defence is always lawful. But the enemy approaches.' He raised his eyes to heaven and uttered a prayer—brief and emphatic—like the prayer of Richard Cameron, 'Lord, spare the green, and take the ripe.'

The officers collected their men, and placed themselves each at the head of those of his own district. Sir Robert Hamilton placed the foot in the centre, in three ranks. A company of horse, well armed and mounted, was placed on the left; and a small squadron also

on the left. These were drawn back, and they occupied the more solid ground; as well with a view to have a more firm footing, as to arrest any flanking party that might take them on the wings. A deep morass lay between us and the ground of the enemy. Our aged men, our females, and children, retired; but they retired slowly. They had the hearts and the courage of the females and children in those days of intense religious feeling, and of suffering. They manifested more concern for the fate of relatives, for the face of the church, than for their own personal safety. As Claverhouse descended the opposite mountain, they retired to the rising ground in the rear of our host. The aged men walked with their bonnets in hand. Their long grey locks waved in the breeze. They sang a cheering psalm. The music was that of the well-known tune of 'The Martyrs;' and the sentiment breathed defiance. The music floated down on the wind. Our men gave them three cheers as they fell into their ranks. Never did I witness such animation in the looks of men. For me, my spouse and my little children were in the rear. My native plains, and the halls of my father, far below, in the dale of Aven, were full in view, from the heights which we occupied. My country seemed to raise her voice—the bleeding church seemed to wail aloud. And these,' I said, as Clavers and his troops

winded slowly down the dark mountain's side, 'these are the unworthy slaves, and bloody executioners, by which the tyrant completes our miseries.'

Hamilton here displayed the hero. His portly figure was seen hastening from rank to rank. He inspired courage into our raw and undisciplined troops. The brave Hackstone, and Hall of Haugh-head, stood at the head of the foot, and re-echoed the sentiments of their Chief. Burley and Cleland had inflamed the minds of the horsemen on the left to a noble enthusiasm. My small troop on the right needed no exhortation; we were a band of brothers, resolved to conquer or fall.

The trumpet of Clavers sounded a loud note of defiance—the kettle-drum mixed his tumultuous roll—they halted—they made a long pause. We could see an officer with four file conducting 14 persons from the ranks to a knoll on their left. I could perceive one in black: it was my friend King, the chaplain of Lord Cardross, who had been taken prisoner by Clavers at Hamilton. 'Let them be shot through the head,' said Clavers in his usual dry way, 'if they should offer to run away.' We could see him view our position with great care. His officers came around him, We soon learned that he wished to treat with us. He never betrayed symptoms of mercy or of justice, nor offered terms of reconciliation, un-

less when he dreaded he had met his match; and, even, then, it was only a manoeuvre, to gain time, or to deceive. His flag approached the edge of the bog. Sir Robert held a flag sacred: had it borne by Clavers himself, he had honoured it. He demanded the purpose for which he came. 'I come,' said he, 'in the name of his sacred Majesty, and of Colonel Grahame, to offer you a pardon, on condition that you lay down your arms, and deliver up your ring-leaders.'—'Tell your officer,' said Sir Robert, 'that we are fully aware of the deception he practises. He is not clothed with any powers to treat, nor was he sent out to treat with us, and attempt a reconciliation. The Government against whom we have risen, refuses to redress our grievances, or to restore to us our liberties. Had the tyrant wished to render us justice, he had not sent by the hands of such a ferocious assassin as Claverhouse. Let him, however, shew his powers, and we refuse not to treat; and we shall lay down our arms to treat, provided he also lay down his. Thou hast my answer.'—'It is a perfectly hopeless case,' said Burley, while he called after the flag-bearer—'Let me add one word, by your leave, General. Get thee up to the bloody dragoon, Clavers, and tell him that we will spare his life, and the lives of his troops, on condition that he, your Clavers, lay down his arms, and the

arms of these troops. We will do more: as we have no prisons on these wild mountains, we will even let him go on his parole, on condition that he swear never to lift arms against the religion and the liberties of his country.' A loud burst of applause re-echoed from the ranks; and, after a long pause in deep silence, the army sung the following verses of a psalm:—

“There arrows of the bow he brake;
The shield, the sword, the war,
More glorious thou than hills of prey,
More excellent art far.

Those that were stout of heart are spoil'd,
They slept their sleep outright;
And none of those their hands did find,
That were the men of might,” &c.

When the report was made to Claverhouse, he gave the word with a savage ferocity. ‘Their blood be on their own heads, be ‘No quarters’ the word this day.* His fierce dragoons raised a yell, and ‘No quarters’ re-echoed from rank to rank, while they galloped down the mountain’s side. It is stated that Burley was heard to say ‘Then be it so—even let their be ‘no quarters’—at least in my wing of the host. So God send a meeting,’ cried he aloud, ‘with that chief under the white plume.

*This fact I find stated also in the “Scots Worthies, p. 468 Edin. edition on of 1812.

My country would bless my memory, could my sword give his villainous carcass to the worms.'

Our raw troops beheld with firmness the approach of the foemen: the whole of our foot dropped on the heath. Not a man was seen to remain down, when the order was given to rise, and return the fire. The first rank fired, then kneeled down, while the other fired. They made each bullet tell. As often as theazy rolling smoke was carried over the enemy's heads, a shower of bullets fell on his ranks. Many a gallant man tumbled on the heath. The fire was incessant. It resembled one blazing sheet of flame, for several minutes, along the line of the covenanters. Clavers attempted to cross the morass, and break our centre. 'Spearmen! to the front,'—I could hear the deep-toned voice of Hamilton say—'Kneel, and place your spears to receive the enemy's cavalry; and you my gallant fellows fire—'God and our Country' is our word,' Our officers flew from rank to rank. Not a peasant gave way that day. As the smoke rolled off, we could see Clavers urging on his men with the violence of despair. His troops around him, and still the gaps were filled up. A galled trooper would occasionally flinch; but ere he could turn or flee, the sword of Clavers was waving over his head. I could see him in his fury strike both man and horse.

In the fearful carnage, he himself sometimes reeled. He would stop short in the midst of a movement, then contradict his own orders, and strike the man, because he could not comprehend his meaning.

He ordered flanking parties to take us on right and left. 'In the name of God,' cried he, 'cross the bog, and charge them on the flanks, till we get over the morass. If this fail we are lost.'

It now fell to my lot to come into action. Hitherto we had fired only some distant shot. A gallant officer led his band down to the borders of the swamp, in search of a proper place or cross. We threw ourselves before him. A severe firing commenced. My gallant men fired with great steadiness. We could see many tumbling from their saddles. Not content with repelling the foemen, we found our opportunity to cross, and attack them sword in hand. The Captain, whose name I afterwards ascertained to be Arrol, threw himself in my path. In the first shock he discharged my pistols. His sudden start on the saddle, told me that one of them had taken effect. With one of the tremendous oaths of Charles II. he closed with me. He fired his steel pistol. I was in front of him.—My sword glanced on the weapon, and gave a direction to the bullet which saved my life. By this time, my men had driven the enemy before them,

and had left the ground clear for the single combat. As he made a lunge at my breast, I turned his sword aside, by one of those sweeping blows which are rather the dictate of a kind of instinct of self-defence, than a movement of art. As our strokes redoubled, my antagonist's dark features put on a look of deep and settled ferocity. No man who has not encountered the steel of his enemy, in the field of battle, can conceive the looks and the manner of the warrior, in the moments of intense feelings. May I never witness them again!—We fought in silence. My stroke fell on his right shoulder; it cut the belt of his carabine which fell to the ground. His blow cut me to the rib, glanced along the bone, and rid me also of the weight of my carabine. He had now advanced too near me, to be struck by the sword, I grasped him by the collar. I pushed him backwards; and, with an entangled blow of my Ferrara, I struck him across his throat. It cut only the strap of his head-piece and it fell off. With a sudden spring he seized me by the sword belt. Our horses reared, and we both came to the ground. We rolled on the heath in deadly conflict. It was in this situation of matters, that my brave fellows had returned from the rout of the flanking party, to look after their commander. One of them was actually rushing on my antagonist when I called on him to re-

tire.* We started to our feet: Each grasped his sword. We closed in conflict again. After parrying strokes of mine enemy which indicated a hellish ferocity, I told him my object was to take him prisoner; that sooner than kill him, I should order my men to seize him. 'Sooner let my soul be branded on my ribs in hell,' said he, 'then be captured by a Whigamore. 'No quarters' is the word of my Colonel, and my word. Have at thee Whig—I dare the whole of you to the combat.' 'Leave the madman to me—leave the field instantly,' said I to my party, whom I could hardly restrain. My sword fell on his right shoulder. His sword dropped from his hand. I lowered my sword, and offered him his life. 'No quarters,' said he, with a shriek of despair. He snatch'd his sword, which I held in my hand, and made a lunge at my breast. I parried his blows till he was nearly exhausted; but gathering up his huge limbs, he put forth all his energy in a thrust at my heart. My Andro Ferara received it, so as to weaken its deadly force; but it made a deep cut. Though I was faint, with loss of blood, I left him no time for another blow. My sword glanced on his shoulder, cut through

* It was on this occasion that the Laird used these words—"Bauldy Allison! let your officer settle this trifle—I never took odds to combat a foe, be he even a life guard.

his buff coat, skin, and flesh; swept through his jaw and laid open his throat from ear to ear. The fire of his ferocious eye was quenched in a moment. He reeled, and falling with a terrible crash, he poured out his soul, with a torrent of blood, on the heath. I sunk down insensible for a moment. My faithful men, who never lost sight of me, raised me up.—In the fierce combat the soldier suffers most from thirst. I stooped down, to fill my helmet with the water which oozed through the morass. It was deeply tinged with human blood, which flowed in the conflict above me. I started back with horror; and Gawn Witherspoon bringing up my steed, we set forward in the tumult of battle.

All this while; the storm of war had raged on our left, Cleland and the fierce Burley had charged the strong company sent to flank them. These officers permitted them to cross the swamp, then charged them with a terrible shout 'No quarter' cried the dragoons. 'Be no quarter, to you then, ye murderous lions,' cried Burley; and at one blow he cut the leader through the steel-cap, and scattered his brains on his followers. His every blow overthrew a foeman. Their whole forces were now brought up, and they drove the dragoons of Clavers into the swamp. They rolled over each other. All stuck fast. The Co. e-

nanters dismounted and fought on foot. They left not one man to bear the tidings to their Colonel.

The firing of the platoons had long ago ceased, and the dreadful work was carried on by the sword. At this moment, a trumpet was heard in the rear of our army. There was an awful pause; all looked up. It was only the gallant Captain Nesbit, and his guide, Woodburn of Mains; he had no reinforcement for us, but himself was a host. With a loud huzza, and flourish of his sword, he placed himself by the side of Burley, and cried, "Jump the ditch, and charge the enemy." He and Burley struggled through the marsh. The men followed as they could. They formed, and marched on the enemy's right flank.

At this instant, Hamilton and Hackstone brought forward the whole line of infantry in front. "God and our country" re-echoed from all the ranks. "No quarters," said the fierce squadrons of Clavers.—Here commenced a bloody scene.

I seized the opportunity this moment offered to me of making a movement to the left of the enemy to save my friend King and the other prisoners. We came in time to save them. Our swords speedily severed the

opes which tyranny had bound on the arms of the men. The weapons of the fallen foe supplied what lacking of arms; and with great vigour we moved forward to charge the enemy on the left flank. Claverhouse formed a hollow square—himself in the centre; his men fought gallantly, they did all that soldiers could do in their situation. Wherever a gap was made Clavers thrust his men forward, and speedily filled it up. Three times he rolled headlong on the heath, as he hastened from rank to rank, and as often he remounted. My little band thinned his ranks. He paid us a visit. Here I distinctly saw the features and shape of this far-famed man. He was small of stature, and not well formed; his arms were long in proportion to his legs; he had a complexion usually dark; his features were not lighted up with sprightliness, as some fabulously reported, they seemed gloomy as hell; his cheeks were lank and deeply furrowed; his eye-brows were drawn down, and gathered into a kind of knot at their junctions, and thrown up at their extremities, they had, in short, the strong impression given by our painters to those on the face of Judas Iscariot; his eyes were hollow; they had not the lustre of genius, nor the fire of activity; they were lighted up by that dark fire of wrath which is kindled and fanned by an in-

terral anxiety, and consciousness of criminal deeds; his irregular and large teeth were presented through a smile, which was very unnatural on his set of features: his mouth seemed to be unusually large, from the extremities being drawn backward and downward—as if in the intense application to something cruel and disgusting; in short, his upper teeth projecten over his under lip, and, on the whole presented to my view the mouth on the image of Judas the Apostate—In one of his rapid courses past us, my sword could only shear off his white plume and a fragment of his buff coat. In a moment he was at the other side of his square. Our officers eagerly sought a meeting with them. ‘He has the proof of lead, cried some of our men—‘Take the cold steel or a piece of silver.’ ‘No,’ cried Burley, ‘It is his rapid movement on that fine charger that bids defiance to any thing like an aim in the tumult of the bloody fray. I could sooner shoot ten heathereocks on the wing, than one flying Clavers.’ At that moment, Burley, whose eye watched his antagonist into the hollow square. But Burley was too impatient. His blow was levelled at him before he came within his reach. His heavy sword descended on the head of Clavers’ horse, and felled him to the ground.—Burley’s men rushed pell-mell on the fallen Clavers, but his

faithful dragoons threw themselves upon them, and by their overpowering force drove Burley back. Clavers was, in an instant, on a fresh steed. His bugleman recalled the party who were driving back the flanking party of Burley. He collected his whole troops to make his last and desperate attack.—He charged our infantry with such force, that they began to reel. It was only for a moment. The gallant Hamilton snatched the white flag of the Covenant, and placed himself in the forefront of the battle. Our men shouted 'God and our Country,' and rallied under their flag. They fought like heroes. Clavers fought no less bravely. His blows were aimed at our officers. His steel fell on the helmet of Hacketone, whose sword was entangled in the body of a fierce dragoon who had just wounded him. He was borne by his men into the rear. I directed my men on Clavers. 'Victory or death,' was their reply to me. Clavers received us. He struck a desperate blow at me, as he raised himself, with all his force, in the saddle. My steel cap resisted it. The second stroke I received on my Ferrara, and his steel was shivered to pieces. We rushed headlong on each other. His pistol missed fire—it had been soaked in blood. Mine took effect. But the wound was not deadly. Our horses reared. We rolled on the ground. •In vain

we sought to grasp each other. In the mele
 men, and horse tumbled on us. We were for
 a few moments buried, our men whose eager-
 ness to save their respective officers brought
 them in multitudes down upon us. By the
 aid of my faithful man Gawn, I extricated my-
 self from my fallen horse; and we were rush-
 ing on the bloody Clavers, when we were a-
 gain literally buried under a mass of men; for
 Hamilton had by this time brought up his
 whole line, and he had planted his standard
 where we and Clavers were rolling on the
 heath. Our men gave three cheers, and drove
 in the troops of Clavers. Here I was borne
 along with the moving mass of men; and, al-
 most suffocated, and faint with the loss of blood
 I knew nothing more till I opened my eyes
 on my faithful attendant. He had dragged
 me from the very grasp of the enemy, and had
 borne me into the rear, and was bathing my
 temples with water. We speedily regained
 our friends; and what a spectacle presented
 itself! It seemed that I beheld an immense
 moving mass heaped up together in the great-
 est confusion. Some shrieked, some groan-
 ed, some shouted, horses neighed and pranc-
 ed, swords rung on the steel helmets. I plac-
 ed around me a few of my hardy men, and we
 rushed into the thickest of the enemy in search
 of Clavers; but in vain. At that instant his

trumpet sounded the loud notes of retreat; and we saw on a knoll Clavers borne away by his men. He threw himself on a horse, and without sword, without helmet, he fled from the first ranks of the retreating host. His horse galloped up the hill in the utmost confusion. My little line closed with that of Burgh's and took a number of prisoners. Our main body pursued the enemy two miles and covered the ground with men and horses. I could see the bareheaded Clavers in front of our men, kicking and struggling up the steep slopes of Calderhill. He halted only a moment on the top to look behind him, then flung his rowels into his horse, and darted forward; nor did he recover from his panic till he found himself in the city of Glasgow."

"And, my children, the Laird would say, after he had told the adventures of this bloody day. "I visited the field of battle next day; I shall never forget the sight. Men and horses lay in their gory beds. I turned away from the horrible spectacle. I passed by the spot where God saved my life in the single combat, and where the unhappy Captain Arrol fell. I observed that in the subsequent day, the body had been trampled on by a horse, and his bowels were poured out.*

* I find this fact recorded in Crookshank's History vol. 1. chap. 13. But the Author does not mention the name of the Laird by whom Arrol fell.

Thus, my children, the defence of our lives, and the regaining of our liberty, and religion, has subjected us to severe trials. And how great must be the love of liberty, when it carries men forward, under the impulse of self-defence, to witness the most disgusting spectacles, and to encounter the most cruel hardships of war!"

E.

FINIS.



